

TRAINING TIMES

Vol. 24 No. 22 Serving the 100th Area Support Group communities of Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Vilseck Nov. 26 - Dec. 9, 2003



Hawija hazard: *Firefight*

page 6 and 7

St. Nick pays early visit to Graf library

pages 3

Discover deploy- ment resources at the Expo

page 9

Graf flag footballers earn runner-up honors

page 10

Army taps new SMA

page 11

It's in the cards

Vilseck Elementary School teacher Melanie Coulter works helps her first-graders with hand-made holiday greeting cards destined for Soldiers deployed to Iraq. The project, developed by school parent Evelyn Lomonaco and overseen by school liaison Steve Vojtecky, resulted in more than 500 cards to be delivered down-range. Graf and Vilseck elementary and Vilseck Middle and High School students participated.

Photo by Chuck Gordon



How are you planning to celebrate the holidays?



Scrooge

Holidays, schmololidays. Bah! It's all a bunch of humbug to me. I plan to have a sensible dinner of roast beef and mustard and then go to bed early.

Frosty

Oh, I suspect I'll just be standing around waiting for snow ...

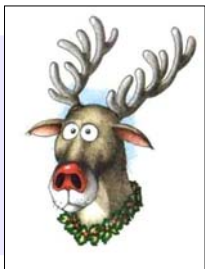


Grinch

Ummm, yessss. The HOLI-DAYS! I plan to ... wait. Is this a trick question? I'll be in, um, Albuquerque, yeah, that's right, Albuquerque ...

Santa Claus

I'll spend my holidays in the islands, surfing and snorkeling. Ho ho ho! Of course, you mean THE holidays! Well, I'll be visiting all the good little children all over the world, won't I?



Rudolph

Holidays? You mean we get holidays? Paid holidays? Wow! Oh, THOSE holidays. I'll be lighting the way, just like every year, making sure the jolly old elf makes his rounds safe and sound.

Interviews and photos by Chuck Gordon

Holiday greetings from ASG's top troop

BY COL. RICHARD G. JUNG
100TH ASG COMMANDER



Jung

The holiday season of 2003 is upon us and with it comes a change not only in the weather and but a change that stirs deep within us.

The change in the weather brings out the overcoats, warm clothes, fireplaces, and hot chocolates.

But the change that stirs deep within us is a change of heart.

We become more open, more understanding of the needs of others and more willing to share with others our good fortunes.

Sharing is the magic of the holiday season.

Eyes light up, both young and old, whenever we give someone a gift.

And when we share our goodwill we are giving the best gift.

We give of ourselves — our goodwill is our time,

our energy, and we give it freely with no expectation of anything in return.

Everyone who gives such a gift experiences a satisfaction deep within them.

So this season I ask that you do something satisfying for yourself and for others.

Go out and spread your goodwill in our community.

Become active in the community, take part in activities, assist your Family Readiness Groups, support your school, volunteer, bring home a guest for the holiday dinner, and simply help others who may be troubled or cooped up in their house or the billets.

I hope to see you out and about. If nothing else we'll exchange holiday greetings and acknowledge that indeed, this is a special time of the year.

From my family to yours — love, peace, comfort, and good fortune. We'll see you around!

Bell sends: Have a happy and **SAFE** holiday

BY GEN. B.B. BELL
USAREUR COMMANDER

This year the Soldiers, civilian employees, and family members of USAREUR have selflessly and tirelessly supported our nation in the Global War on Terrorism and in military operations around the world.

In light of all you have done and continue to do, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to you for your sacrifices. While thousands of our soldiers are deployed on missions in Iraq and Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, and a dozen other places, many are still in their garrisons here in Europe.

For those of you in garrison, I would encourage you to take full advantage of the upcoming holiday break. Use this time to enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation, spend time with your families and other loved ones, and replenish your mental, emotional, and physical reserves.

As you enjoy this brief break from your regular duties, we must all continue to remain vigilant in terms of safety. The holiday season can be deadly, and the month of December is particularly dangerous. Our number-one priority during this time is ensuring the safety and welfare of every Soldier, civilian, and family member. The USAREUR 2003 Holiday Safety Campaign memorandum lists areas of particular concern to all of us during the holidays.

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Domestic violence — The holiday period is often stressful. Deployments and pending deployments place additional stress on individuals and families. This stress can lead to spouse abuse and other forms of domestic violence. Commanders and first-line supervisors must pay attention to their subordinates. Being sensitive to their needs will help prevent domestic violence. Individuals should seek counseling if needed.

Excessive alcohol consumption and drunk driving — The increased number of social functions over the holidays increases the opportunities for excessive or binge drinking. This in turn increases the likelihood of drunk driving and alcohol-related

incidents. Personnel who plan to drink alcoholic beverages at holiday celebrations should do so in moderation and ensure that they have a safe means of getting home. Soldiers should keep in mind that a drunk-driving conviction can end their career.

Home fires — Decorations such as candles, trees, and electrical lights and devices all increase the risk of fire in the home. All of us must take steps to reduce fire hazards and prevent fire from turning our holiday celebration into tragedy.

Recreational hazards — Winter sports and recreation activities represent significant risk to Soldiers, civilians, and family members. Personnel participating in winter activities should ensure that they have the proper equipment to help prevent injury.

Suicide — The holiday season can be a very lonely and difficult time for those who are separated from their families and their homes. Leaders must know how to recognize depression and suicidal behavior and respond accordingly. DA Pamphlet 600-70 and Army in Europe Command Policy Letter 28 provide additional guidance.

Use of fireworks — Many European countries celebrate New Year's Eve with fireworks and other incendiary devices, all of which are dangerous. Soldiers and civilians should avoid using fireworks and take extra care to ensure that their children do the same.

Vehicle Accidents — The winter brings fewer hours of daylight and hazardous conditions (including black ice, fog, and snow). When these conditions are combined with roads crowded with holiday travelers, the likelihood of accidents increases. Making the season even more dangerous is the increased number of drunk drivers on the road during this period. Personnel who plan to travel over the holidays must be advised to drive defensively and to be prepared for bad weather.

By working together and paying close attention to the areas of concern listed above, we can achieve our goal of "No Loss of Life." I am proud of each of you and grateful for your continued commitment to our nation. Have a safe and happy holiday!

Training Times

The Training Times is an unofficial biweekly publication authorized by AR 360-1. Editorial views are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The paper is an offset publication prepared and edited by the 100th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office. Training Times is printed by the Stars & Stripes. Circulation is 6,000 copies. Submissions are welcome. Mail announcements, letters to the editor and commentaries to PAO, Unit 28130, Attn: Training Times, APO AE 09114. Send e-mail to: communityinfo@cmtymail.100asg.army.mil. Call the Training Times at DSN 475-7113 or fax story ideas and events to DSN 475-7935. Advertising inquiries should be made to Susan Sobin at DSN 349-8407 or civ. 06155-601-407.

100th ASG Commander
Col. Richard G. Jung
100th ASG Public Affairs Officer
Kathleen Gibbs (475-8103)
Chief, Command Information
Chuck Gordon (475-7217)

Editorial Staff
Chuck Gordon (475-7217)
Kevin Young (475-6417)

Commentary:**Giving thanks to family and host nation**

BY JOSE VELZ

Thanksgiving is one of the most memorable holidays for Americans.

It's a time to get together with family and friends; to cherish what we have in this life.

The staff of the Hohenfels Teen Center thought it would be a good idea to share this custom with the locals in Germany.

They invited an orphanage in neighboring Hemau, to come on post for a Thanksgiving Day dinner and activities.

The schedule was set up with dinner followed by activities such as a pool tournament, Cosmo, ping pong, and a variety of other games. The Teen Center staff wanted American teens to get a better insight into the German cul-

ture and have fun while giving something back to the community.

Baking, planning, prep work and a lot of dedicated effort all helped make the event a success.

Donations from the Hohenfels community came in, ranging from time, money and groceries from various teens, the Boy Scouts of America, the commissary, and the soldiers of the 1st Battalion 4th Infantry.

The guests of honor, 14 German teens and three chaperones, arrived around 5:30 p.m.

Everything from the turkey to the pumpkin pie was homemade so the Germans got a taste of traditional American food made for this holiday.

One of the main ideas behind the event was that the teens communicate with each other.

Some American teens were quick to introduce themselves, while others were a bit less outgoing.

Things warmed up after dinner, though, as things turned competitive.

The teens faced off in a pool tournament and other games. Those who wanted to express their creative side drew a picture, or participated in Cosmo, nails and hair.

The night was filled with fun and that was one of the important factors that the Hohenfels Teen Center wanted.

The festivities ended at 7:30 p.m., when the German teens had to depart.

Afterwards, all that was left from the night were memories and a lot of uneaten Pumpkin pie.

Graf throws a holiday party: You're invited!

The City of Grafenwoehr is hosting a party for the Graf and Vilseck military communities Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. in the Stadthalle. There will be fun and games for the kids, Christmas cake for all, music by the elementary school choir and a visit from Santa Claus. For more information and to sign up, contact your rear detachment commander or the 100th ASG PAO at 475-1600.

Soldier's Creed

I am an American Soldier.
I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

*I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.*

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment, and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

New creed focuses on warrior ethos

The Chief of Staff of the Army recently released the new Soldier's Creed, which is shown below. This creed is a key aspect of the Army's renewed emphasis on developing the Warrior Ethos in all Soldiers. The Warrior Ethos—the heart of the Soldier's Creed—is shown in green. While always exemplifying Army Values, Soldiers that live the Warrior Ethos put the mission first, refuse to accept defeat, never quit, and never leave behind a fallen comrade. Both CSM Gravens and I embrace the Soldier's Creed and Warrior Ethos. We want every soldier to do the same. All USAREUR leaders and Soldiers need to read it and then live it.

B. B. BELL
General, USA
Commanding

MICHAEL L. GRAVENS
Command Sergeant Major, USA

Features**Grafenwoehr library gets early visit from Jolly Old Elf**

Andrea Pekarek, 5, gets ready to meet a living legend.



Monica Falcon and Maya, 5, thank Santa for the treats. Each child received a candy Santa and a book.



photos by Chuck Gordon

Iman Lewis, 4, chats with Santa about her holiday wish list. Santa made an early stop at the Graf library Dec. 5 to visit with local kids, hand out a few treats, and wish everyone in the 100th ASG a "Very Merry Christmas!"

MWR/ODR trips offer chance to tour Europe

Looking for something to do?

MWR trips offer a great way to see the Europe. Check with your local MWR and ODR for details about times and prices.

- Dec. 13 --** Regensburg Christmas Market **
- Dec. 13 --** Neuschwanstein Castle, \$30 *
- Dec. 14 --** Rothenburg Christmas Market, \$15 *
- Dec. 19 --** Casino trip, \$15 *
- Dec. 20 --** Nuernberg Christmas Market **
- Dec. 20 --** Prague *
- Dec. 21 --** Gorlitz Holiday Shopping, \$30 *
- Dec. 27 --** Garmisch - Ski the Zugspitz! **
- Dec. 27 --** Karlovy Vary *
- Dec. 28 --** Munich, German National Museum *

* ITR Grafenwoehr/Vilseck
** ITR Hohenfels

Graf: Bldg. 600, DSN 475-7402
Vilseck: Bldg. 607, DSN 476-2360

Hohenfels ITR: Bldg. 40, CAC, DSN 466-2225
Hohenfels Outdoor Rec: Bldg. H-15, DSN 466-2060

CPO Europe produces new guide for filling jobs

CPO EUROPE NEWS RELEASE

The U.S. Army, Europe Civilian Personnel Operations Center has produced a new guidebook for managers called *Managers/Supervisors Job Kit: Filling Jobs in USAREUR*.

This booklet, available online at www.chrma.hqusaar.army.mil under What's New, provides managers with instructions on how to effectively recruit and hire qualified employees using the Army's human resource information system, Resumix.

This guide is a valuable tool for any Army manager or supervisor

with hiring responsibilities. It provides managers with a quick reference that directs them through the Appropriated Fund hiring process.

The guide describes, step-by-step, the process managers or supervisors must undertake to recruit, select and hire new employees, as well as what occurs at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center and CPOC. The booklet first describes how the entire hiring process works. It then details recruitment procedures, including:

- Writing a job description
- Initiating a Request for Personnel Action to begin the recruitment

and hiring process

• Determining the recruitment strategy that will attract qualified applicants

A reference guide is included that defines many personnel related terms, describes recruitment methods, and provides sources for locating candidates. The guide also provides tips on interviewing applicants.

The U.S. Army, Europe CPOC encourages all Army supervisors who hire AF civilian employees to acquire and review the material contained in this guide before initiating the recruitment process.

Overseas Housing Allowance Survey available online

IMA EUROPE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee has put the annual Overseas Housing Allowance Survey on the internet at www.milsurveys.com/OHA/.

In the past, the survey was mailed only a sample of Soldiers. Some felt utility and move-in expenses were not properly captured.

This year all Soldiers who reside in privately leased quarters overseas and receive an OHA can complete the survey online.

The committee conducts the survey annually to collect utility and recurring maintenance expense data from Soldiers who receive an overseas housing allowance.

They use this data to compute accurate OHA utility and MIHA allowances for Soldiers worldwide.

The online questionnaire is similar in scope to previous surveys.

Respondents must have actual bills or records of their utility expenses and maintenance expenses for the last 12 months.

They will be expected to compute a monthly average for each of these expenses.

Soldiers who have lived off post less than 12 months can average known utility expenses.

For the MIHA portion, they will be asked to report actual moving in expenses.

Respondents may find it easier to take the survey at home, working

alongside their spouses.

To log in to the online survey, Soldiers will be asked for their Social Security number to ensure that they are eligible to complete the survey.

The survey will issue a "ticket number" which Soldiers can use if they wish to complete the survey in more than one session.

Once the survey is completed, responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

The survey is available on the web until Jan. 31.

Soldiers who do not have access to the internet or prefer to work from a paper copy should contact the 266th Finance Command at 379-5160 for hard copies of the surveys.

Car crash claims Hohenfels child's life

7TH ATC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

An eight-year-old boy, whose family is assigned to the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment in Hohenfels, was killed and his parents and two younger brothers, were injured Nov. 26, shortly after 7 p.m.

The car they were traveling in collided with a vehicle driven by a local national on highway 31 south of Parsberg.

The names of the dead and injured are being withheld due to privacy concerns.

The deceased child died at the scene of the crash. The father was transported to the hospital in Neumarkt with a concussion and

lacerations to the face and body.

The mother was unconscious when transported to the University Hospital in Regensburg where she regained consciousness and is being treated for contusions to the body.

The remaining two children, ages five and two, are being treated for head trauma and contusions to the body at the Saint Hedwig's Children's Hospital in Regensburg.

The local national driver of the second vehicle received non-life threatening injuries to his face and arm.

The cause of the accident is under investigation by German and American police authorities.

Vilseck Soldier found dead in Danube

1ST ID PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A 1st Infantry Division soldier missing since Oct. 20 has been found dead.

Spc. Brian P. Thomas, age 20, a supply clerk with F Troop, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, in Vilseck, was discovered Nov. 25, in the Danube River near Regensburg.

Thomas, a native of Waukesha, Wisc., is survived by his mother, Laura Thomas. The cause of death is under investigation.

A memorial service was held Dec. 4 in the Vilseck Chapel.



Thomas



Above: Manuel Rivera, 8, son of Humberto Rivera, takes a turn drumming with Grupo Calli, an Aztec group from Mexico, on Thanksgiving Day. Grupo Calli was on post to help celebrate native American Heritage Month and Thanksgiving.

Right: An Aztec dancer with Grupo Calli performs a traditional sneak-up dance on Thanksgiving Day at the post theater in Graf. The group uses dance and story-telling to inform and educate audiences about their heritage.



Commissary news

Gift Certificates great for holidays

Commissary gift certificates are available for the holidays, special occasions or any time, at www.commissaries.com.

Friends and families and charitable organizations may purchase gift certificates to assist soldiers and their families in having a bountiful holiday season.

Gift certificates can also be donated to benefit military personnel in need through the USO and the Air Force Aid Society.

Check the commissary website for more information.

Commissary gift certificates may be purchased by anyone, but only authorized commissary shoppers can redeem them. They may be used in any U.S. military commissary worldwide.

A toll-free number may also be used to make purchases at 877-770-GIFT (4438), but it's only toll-free in the United States.

Purchasers overseas should use the commissary website to save long distance phone charges.

A \$4.95 fee pays the vendor's costs for printing, mailing and handling of up to 20 certificates going to the same address, but additional fees apply for special handling and for orders over \$300.

Although regular delivery to recipients generally takes four to 10 days, delivery overseas may take longer.

Scholarships for military children

Don't wait too long to find out if you qualify for a \$1,500 scholarship.

The 2004 Scholarships for Military Children program, administered by the Fisher House Foundation, is now under way.

This year the program administrator, Fisher House Foundation, set up a dedicated website at www.militaryscholar.org.

The new site has information about the program and a donation page. The site will be live year-round, and is accessible through a link from www.commissaries.com.

The application period for the 2004 scholarship program began Nov. 3 and ends Feb. 18, 2004.

Don't let crime spoil holidays

The holiday shopping season is here again. Regrettably, it is also the season for holiday crime.

Shoppers with privileges at military commissaries and exchanges have a safe shopping alternative with little or no crime.

But if holiday shopping includes a trip off the installation, just be aware that statistics have proven over the years that even criminals do last minute holiday 'shopping.'

Here are some precautions you can take to thwart a crook's holiday plans:

- Shop on military installations whenever possible. Commissaries carry a tremendous

variety of products for holiday meals, as well as candy and snacks at savings of 30 percent or more.

Exchanges carry everything needed to cook that holiday meal, as well as a great selection of affordable gifts for everyone in the family.

- Park in well lighted areas and try to shop during daylight hours.

- Never carry large amounts of cash.

- Use your checkbook, credit or debit cards to make most of your holiday purchases.

- Never carry your ATM or other debit cards with your personal identification number.

- If carrying a purse, carry it on the inside of your arm, on the side that is furthest from the street.

- Let someone know where you are going shopping and what time you expect to return. Shopping with a friend is a relaxing, fun way to increase your personal safety when you shop.

- If a robber accosts you, remain calm and give up the property the robber wants. Nothing you are carrying is worth the risk to your life.

Taking these few extra precautions will help insure you don't become a victim to a Grinch waiting to spoil your holiday fun. Have a safe and joyful holiday!

For more info and commissary news, go to www.commissaries.com.

Reserve, Guard troops get more shopping privileges

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 granted Army Reserve and National Guard members, along with their families, unlimited access to commissaries.

Guard and Reserve members were authorized 24 commissary shopping days per calendar year until the president signed the National Defense Authorization Act Nov. 24.

The bill contained provisions eliminating the restriction. Commissaries adopted the new provisions, and Guard and Reserve members no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

"Instructions have gone out to all continental U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shopping and telling store managers how to welcome members of the National Guard and Reserve to the full use of the commissary benefit," said Patrick Nixon, Defense Commissary Agency. "Commissary shoppers will begin to see banners saying 'Welcome Guard and Reserve to Full Time Savings,' along with other events recognizing these new full-time shoppers."

Unlimited commissary benefits have been extended to:

- Members of the Ready Reserve, Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and National Guard, and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a valid military ID card.

- Former reservists who are eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age of 60 and who possess a DoD civilian ID card.

- Dependents of those described above who have valid military ID cards.

Access hours change when revamped Graf gate reopens

Graf's gate at Alte Amberger Strasse reopened Dec. 8 following upgrades and renovation, but with new operating hours.

The gate will continue to be accessible for pedestrians and bicycle traffic 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Vehicle traffic, however, will see some changes.

The gate will be open for inbound vehicles from 6 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. only. Outbound traffic can use the gate from 9:30 a.m. until 10 p.m. The gate will be closed to

all vehicles from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.

The Alte Amberger Strasse gate is open to U.S. ID card and installation pass holders only. Sign-ins and other non-pass-holders must go through the main gate off B-299 (Neue Amberger Strasse).

MWR holiday schedules

All MWR facilities will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Additionally:

- Tower View Restaurant will close Dec. 22-Jan. 2.

- Yesterday's Club will close Dec. 20-30 and Jan. 1.

- Graf Bowling Center will close Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1.

- Vilseck and Graf Teen Centers will close Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1.

- Vilseck ODR will close Dec. 25, Dec. 27-28 and Jan. 1.

- Vilseck and Graf libraries will close Dec. 24-16, and Dec. 31-Jan. 2.

- Vilseck VAT Office will close Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1.

- Vilseck Arts & Crafts will close Dec. 25-27 and Jan. 1.

- Graf Arts & Crafts will close Dec. 21-Jan. 6.

- Vilseck Auto Crafts will close Dec. 24-26 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1.

- Graf Auto Crafts will close Dec. 22-Jan. 1.

Also note that several facilities may alter opening hours through the holiday season and several organizations will close early Dec. 17 for holiday parties.

Hawija hazard

Vilseck troops professional under fire

BY KAREN S. PARRISH
7th ATC Public Affairs

Hawija (or al Hawija, depending on the source), near Kirkuk in northern Iraq, has a certain reputation among deployed U.S. forces. According to published reports, some troops refer to the area as "bad guy central."

In recent weeks, Hawija has been the site of mortar attacks against U.S. forces, and the roundup by other U.S. forces of dozens of suspected insurgents. But indications that Hawija was not a nice place date back well before those incidents.

"That area has always been kind of a bad spot. It's like that part of a big city where you don't go after dark," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael D. Williamson.

He speaks from early experience of the Hawija hazard. Scout Platoon, Task Force 1-63, is home-based in Vilseck under 3rd Brigade as part of the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment. But they've been deployed to Iraq since April, and first proved themselves under fire — near Hawija — in May, when Williamson was serving as platoon sergeant.

One dramatic "war story" from that engagement centers on two specialists, one of whom came out of the firefight with a Bronze Star with "V" Device (for valor), although he didn't fire a shot.

Sp. Dante Cammarata, a medic who was assigned to the Scout Platoon, earned the medal for his treatment of Spc. Billy Barnes, who was shot early in the firefight. Cammarata assessed and bandaged Barnes while bullets struck the ground all around them, and because he had to remove the wounded gunner's body armor to bandage him, protected Barnes with his own body during the remainder of the 40-minute engagement.

Barnes received an Army Commendation Medal with V Device, and a Purple Heart.

While Cammarata and Barnes speak vividly of their experiences, Williamson puts their story in a larger context — a context that he maintains proves the mettle of not just the two specialists, but also the entire platoon.

Cammarata recently came back from Iraq to attend the Primary Leadership Development Course at Grafenwoehr's 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy. Barnes, who returned to Vilseck in June to recover from his wound, is slated to return to Iraq soon. Williamson left his position as platoon sergeant when he received orders to Fort Bragg, N.C., but came back to Vilseck to find 1st ID under a new stop-loss order, so he will now fill an operations post here.

With few exceptions, the rest of the platoon the three men shared their Hawija battle with are still performing Scout Platoon missions for TF 1-63 in Iraq.

The mission

It was the night of May 18. TF 1-63 was attached to 173rd Infantry Brigade, with Scout Battalion tasked to advance ahead of the battalion's main body.

"What the Scouts were doing was clearing an assembly area for the battalion, (and they were) going to be the QRF (Quick Reaction Force) for the brigade, because the brigade was doing some simultaneous operations in other towns," Williamson said.

Williamson, Barnes and Cammarata all say that as the platoon progressed, seven Humvees in a tactical road march formation, they noticed tracer fire shooting into the sky from each town they passed — "People shooting rounds in the air in the middle of the night," as Barnes described it.

"What it seemed like to us was that they were signaling from one town to the next," Cammarata said.

As Williamson pointed out, the lights of military vehicles are easy to recognize. With the signaling, the platoon was aware that anyone ahead of them on their route probably knew they were coming, he said.

Several kilometers short of the designated assembly area point, the platoon stopped to do a "listening halt," Williamson said.

"The platoon stopped short before what we called the light line," he said. "That was an area we had designated on the map where we were going to go to complete blackout ... four or five kilometers short of where the assembly area was supposed to be."

The purpose of the listening halt, he said, was, "So the guys could make sure all their lights were off, get accustomed to the sights and the sounds going on around them, get their night vision set — it was just an opportunity for the guys to take a few minutes to focus, make sure everything was squared away before we moved on."

But then the plan changed, Williamson said, when first one vehicle, then several others, approached the platoon's position from both sides of the road. The Humvees were drawn to the edge of the road in a herringbone formation, trucks on each side angled outward for the best view of the surrounding terrain. They couldn't pull completely off the road, he said, because of the ditches on either side.

"So a car came up to the rear of the platoon herringbone," he said. "Capt. (Mario) Soto (officer in charge) made the determination that we were going to turn this into a quick TCP (traffic control point) to check these guys out. It was just going to be this one car, we were going to see what they were up to and let them move on. We were going to move out, right after the car went away, but that's not what happened."

Instead, the platoon gradually discovered that they had interrupted a large-scale movement of men, weapons and money, Williamson said.

In the first car, he said, the platoon found grenades, assault rifles, and magazines of ammunition. "We were detaining (the occupants), and then another car came to the front of the formation, and Capt. Soto moved forward with the guys in front," he said.

That car also contained armed men, Williamson said.

"So then we were moving back and forth, because now we had prisoners at the front of the formation and at the rear," he said. And the

vehicles kept coming.

"So in 15 or 20 minutes, we had 15 prisoners. One car would come up at the back, we'd stop them and check them out, they'd have weapons, (and) we would immediately detain them," he said.

The situation was complicated, he said, by the lack of light. "The only lights that we used were the tac lights (low-level sighting lights) on the rifles. It wasn't a big signature, so it wasn't like we were drawing them like a moth to a flame. They were moving to an ambush position, or maybe going on to do something else, but they got caught on the move."

Williamson said the presence of the prisoners dictated a change in mission, at least temporarily.

"We couldn't move forward to clear the assembly area until battalion showed up (with armored vehicles) so we could hand these guys off, because we couldn't take them with us," he said. "We had the weapons secured in one area, and the prisoners in another area. With 15 prisoners, we had enough weapons from them to fill the back of my truck (Humvee). We collected hand grenades, AK-47s, S&W sniper rifles, pistols, a squad machine gun — each guy had at least one weapon of some sort. If you laid all the weapons on the hood of a Humvee, they would cover the hood. And they were piled up."

Most of the prisoners were in their early thirties to mid-forties, Williamson said. Soldiers in the platoon searched the prisoners and "zip-stripped" their hands, confining their wrists with plastic ties, before moving them to a guarded area within the platoon formation.

The attack

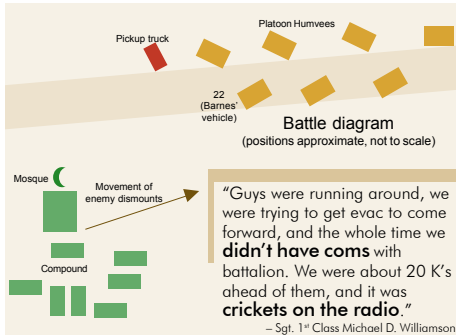
What triggered the firefight, Williamson said, was probably the last vehicle the platoon stopped at the improvised TCP. It was a small pickup truck with three men inside.

Cammarata said, "There was a dude standing up in the back, with his hands up on top of the truck, and they couldn't see what was in his hands. But he wouldn't put his hands up — they kept motioning for him to put his hands up."

"And you could feel the air, feel everything just go ...," he paused, and he and Barnes said at the same time, "tense." Cammarata continued, "Capt. Soto fired a warning shot (for procedure), and at that point, that's when we started receiving fire from the field, from approximately 400, 500 meters away."

Williamson said, "I didn't find this out until later, but the very last vehicle we stopped (the pickup) was full of money. I couldn't honestly say what triggered (the attack). It might have been the warning shot, because the guy in that truck wouldn't let go of his weapon when they were approaching. It could have been that we stopped their whole group, and somebody nearby had seen that and they were upset about it, (or) it could have been that we got the money truck."

Williamson said the platoon didn't get the chance, then, to find out how much money was



in the truck. "We had detained the three individuals that were in that truck, and put them on the ground and zip-stripped them, and then as we were picking them up off the ground, people started shooting at us. I heard either Spc. (John) Zagya or Staff Sgt. (Scott) Isom, in the front (Humvee). They were yelling, 'Hey, you guys get out of there, they're shooting at you.' I couldn't hear any shots. But then two or three seconds later, you could hear the sounds coming in."



Cammarata



Barnes

arrived at Barnes' position seconds after he did, Cammarata said.

"So when he got there I had already got Barnes' body armor off and torn his (uniform) jacket open. I saw there was a wound, and there was no exit wound, so I concluded that the bullet, or whatever had hit him, was still in there. I put pressure on it, and sent them to go grab my aid bag by the truck. Sgt. (1st Class) Williamson all this time was laying down fire for us, giving us protection," Cammarata said.

Williamson said he took over applying pressure once the aid bag arrived and the medic started unwrapping a field dressing. When the wound was bandaged, he said, he and Cammarata moved Barnes to the other side of the Humvee, to a more protected position.

"I didn't like them being out there in front of the truck, because we were taking fire and the rounds were skipping off the pavement," he said. "So we pulled Barnes back to the other side of the truck and laid him behind the wheel, so the steel rims would afford him some protection. And then Cammarata continued to work and I started directing ... platoon fire."

Meanwhile, Williamson said, enemy movement started up near the compound past the mosque.

"A vehicle with a weapon mounted moved out from there, letting off dismounts, and they started to try to flank the platoon. There was a

"When I brought my hand back I could see the blood," Barnes said. "I realized no one was going to find me inside ... so I came crawling out of the driver's door, yelling for him (pointing to Cammarata), because he was on the other side of my Humvee."

Cammarata had been assisting with the prisoners, he said, and was near Barnes' position when he heard the yell go up, first from Barnes and then picked up by other platoon members: "Medic!"

"I think that's who I am," he said. "So I ran over there, and (Barnes) was by the right side fender of the vehicle, right by the front of the vehicle, and I dropped down and started working on him."

Williamson

seemingly came to the mosque, he said. "All the cars we were detaining were stacked up about 50 meters from the formation. And the last truck was parked at an angle at the front of the formation and had its headlights shining across just past the first truck on the left side of the road. The mosque was maybe 200, 250 meters away. It looked a lot further at night. What Zagya was seeing was the signature (muzzle flash) from the weapons they were firing. Then the rounds started coming through the formation," Williamson said.

sounds started coming ...

Firefight

Barnes' Humvee, number 22, was in a direct line with the incoming shots. He was in his position atop the Humvee, looking through the sights of his 50-caliber weapon. "I remember seeing the lights in the (nearby compound) all just go out, and then I saw muzzle flashes. Capt. Soto was saying 'return fire.' I was firing a 50-cal, and I think I got 20 rounds off. I remember seeing five tracers, and then just a flash of light, and all of a sudden I was in the Humvee, holding my side. I didn't know what happened."

The platoon's vehicles were not then equipped with gunner shields, although the platoon received and installed the shields about a month later. "If he'd had a shield, he probably wouldn't have gotten hit," Williamson said.



big irrigation ditch, and I think they were going to try to work up that ditch to try to flank us," he said.

Because of the platoon's position, Williamson said, several of the vehicles were not in a position where they could bring fire to bear.

"These guys couldn't fire because they would have been firing through the other vehicles, so they were looking off in other directions to guard against fire from other points," he said.

It took a lot of discipline to hold fire, Williamson said, because the volume of incoming fire was heavy: the detained cars "got shredded. They were taking fire from both sides."

"Sgt. (Michael) Pershell climbed up on 22 (Barnes' position) and took the gun," Williamson said. "Zagya was seeing dismounts, Sgt. Pershell was seeing stuff, so we were alternating 50-cal fire. Guys were running around, we were trying to get evac to come forward, and the whole time we didn't have coms with battalion. We were about 20 K's ahead of them, and it was crickets on the radio."

While Soto tried to establish radio contact, Williamson directed platoon fire. He said,

"We just kept changing positions, trading off — checking on security, adjusting positions. Then I told Capt. Soto he needed to bring his truck up, because we needed Mark 19 (grenade launcher) brought forward. We were getting a pretty heavy volume of fire to the front. And I told Sgt. (Jeffrey) Harris to go get 240s (M-240 machine gun), and he went back and got three gunners, so we put a line of two 240s forward and another one right behind 22."

While he was directing fire, Williamson said, he was also trying to figure out how soon he could get Barnes medically evacuated.

"I knew we had to get him out of there. That was one focus — along with directing the platoon fire. Neither was more important than the other," he said.

Behind 22, Cammarata was continuing to work on Barnes.

"I was laying on top of him, because at that point his RBA (body armor) was off. I was keeping pressure on his side. That was the first time when I was actually looking at where we were taking fire, because I had my back to it before that. I was seeing bullets bounce off the ground," Cammarata said. "And I looked down

at Barnes, and he was like, 'This is surreal.'"

Cammarata said he and Barnes concentrated on keeping calm during the chaos around them — in the darkness, bullets flying in all directions.

"I wanted to make sure he was still in it, because I knew as long as I could keep him talking to me that he wasn't going to stop breathing, and that his vitals were basically all right," Cammarata said. "And he calmed me, I think, as much as I was calming him. I focused on my job instead of what was going on around us. We were there for — it felt like forever, but it was probably 20 minutes or so."

Barnes, at one point, called out to an embedded journalist who was traveling with the platoon. Barnes said, "He was out in the open, sitting behind the Humvee, and the tracers were just flying by. I remember yelling at him, 'Get behind the tire!'"

Several members of the unit came by to check on the two, Cammarata said. "I told them at the time that we needed to get him out of there, we needed to evac him. I knew he was stable, but ... the bullet was still in him. And that could have meant that it went in and bounced around and messed up some vital organs ... I knew it would be a while before we could get him out of there, but I wanted them to be thinking about it, have it in their minds during all the craziness."

During the firefight, about 10 or 11 of the platoon's 30 members were able to bring fire to bear, Williamson said. "We were trying to bring max fire power forward. The whole thing, start to finish, was about 40 minutes, and we were out of coms with battalion for about 25, 30 minutes. When Capt. Soto finally got coms with battalion, as I understand it, when those guys heard we taking fire, they took off — those Bradleys and tanks were like 50 miles an hour down the hardball."

"And I hear they could see the tracer fire — they'd see the fire coming in, then a huge volume of tracer fire going out, from us. So they knew exactly where we were," he said.

Bravo Company's Bradleys showed up, he said, moved slightly northwest "to get some standoff," and started firing into the mosque and the compound.

Then Charlie Company's tanks moved in, he said, and began firing HEAT (high-explosive antitank) rounds into the compound.

About that time, Williamson said, Barnes was moved back out of the zone of fire and evacuated by helicopter.

Soon after, Barnes said, he was receiving further treatment and was on the phone with his wife, who was in Colorado, explaining to her what had happened.

Meanwhile, Williamson said, the firefight was almost over. After the tanks arrived, he said, there was a heavily increased volume of enemy fire, but it was soon suppressed. "And then an A-10 (A-10 Thunderbolt, a close air support plane) moved in and what was left of the dismounts in this field, the A-10 finished off with the main gun. And after that was silence," he said.

None of the other platoon members were wounded, he said, nor were any of the prisoners, who had been kept under guard in a protected area throughout the engagement. Enemy dead were estimated at 14 to 18, although any bodies — even shell casings — were removed after the Task Force moved off to continue its mission later that night, according to published reports.

Aftermath

"Cammarata went beyond what he had to do," Williamson said. "He didn't have to shield Barnes with his body. And Barnes kept trying to get the reporter who was with us out of danger. They did a really good job."

"It's unfortunate that Barnes got shot, and he's still recovering," Williamson said. "He won't be taking a PT test for a while, at least the sit-up portion ... But he was positive about the whole thing, he was in good spirits even while it was all going on. He didn't freak out or anything like that."

Of the platoon as a whole, Williamson said, "I'd say those guys did exactly what they were supposed to do. I didn't see any guys falter, I didn't see any guy hesitate — not that I would expect to — in doing what they needed to do to accomplish this mission, or in the situation they were in. None of the guys shied away from putting effective fire on the enemy, doing their job as best they could."

Cammarata and Barnes both expressed great pride in the Scout Platoon. "They're the most professional soldiers you'll find, next to the Special Forces," Cammarata said.

Williamson said the unit's training and attitude make them successful. "They didn't go to Iraq in the same mindset they would have going to Kosovo," he said. "They went thinking, 'We're going to war' ... I couldn't ask for a better group of guys, or more disciplined soldiers, or for them to perform any better than they did."

Scouts, Williamson said, are standouts "because they're Scouts."

"It's been my experience that Scouts in a battalion or in a task force are the lead platoon. They are the guys that have the tough job. They go out in front and find people and clear the way," he said.

"This platoon, they care about what they're doing," he continued. "The leadership cares about training the guys to be proficient, and the guys care about doing the job for the leadership. They don't want to be known as just that Scout platoon," they want to be known as the best Scout platoon."

Williamson said, "I wasn't just me, or Capt. Soto, or Cammarata. It was all the guys — I hadn't been for everybody doing the right thing, doing what they had to do, it wouldn't have gone off the way it did. They did a good job, and they continue to do a good job down-range."

Optometry clinic closing

The Vilseck Optometry clinic will be closed through Dec. 19. The MEDDAC Optometrist and civilian assistant will be at the 3rd Brigade Pre-Deployment Expo at the Hilltop Gym, Rose Barracks. Ocular emergencies should be triaged at community health centers and then referred to the economy as needed. Normal clinic hours resume on Jan. 5. Holiday hours are 7 a.m.-noon.

For more info, call 476-2749 or send e-mail to: riz.khan@wur.amedd.army.mil.

Mailroom request

Due to the increase in the amount of mail through the holidays, customers are encouraged to check mailboxes frequently and collect packages promptly. Space is limited in the community mailrooms, and the shelves fill up fast.

Daddy Boot Camp

There's a lot they didn't teach you in Basic Training. New or expectant fathers can get the lowdown from the Vilseck Army Community Service-New Parent Support Program, Dec. 11, 3:30-6:30 p.m. Call Rochelle Marshall to register for the course.

For more info, call Grafenwoehr 475-2650 or 09662-83-2650, or Hohenfels 09472-83-4860 or 466-4860.

Shopping tip

Just in time for the holidays, the American Red Cross offers beautiful blankets with a Vilseck/Graf/Hohenfels area theme. Blankets are available in red and blue with a beige background, \$45 dollars each. For more info, call 476-1760.

Kontakt trip

The Vilseck Kontakt Klub is planning an outing to the Pullman

City Christmas Market Dec. 14. The group will depart at 10 a.m. from the parking lot of the seafood restaurant in Sorghof. For more info, call 0175-467 5436, or call the clubhouse Wednesdays after 7 p.m.: 476-3599 or civ. 09662-83-3599.

Family and Soldier Readiness Expo

Come to the Vilseck Hilltop Gym and discover how to make the deployment go a little smoother. The expo provides tons of interesting information, for both on-post and off-post organizations. Free on-site child care is available and spouses can participate in special prize drawings. The expo runs Dec. 15-19, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Holiday closings

- The 409th BSB DPW will be closed Dec. 19 from noon on, for their Christmas party. Report emergencies to the Grafenwoehr fire station at 475-8303.
- 100th ASG DPW and CFMO, Eschenbach, will close Dec. 12 at noon for their annual holiday party.

Concert

The Jugenblaskappella Weihnachtskonzert will be held Dec. 21 in Hohenfels. The concert is slated for the new auditorium of the elementary school. Time to be announced. The conductor has invited the chapel community to bring a choir together to sing a traditional Christmas songs with the band. For more info, contact Mary Jane Dinsmore at 09182-939-613, or Joyce Dussenberry at joyce_dussenberry@ed.odedodea.edu.

Ski and Snowboarding Club

The Graf/Vilseck German-American Ski and Snowboarding Club is open to members of all three 100th ASG communities. Meetings are the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 7 p.m. in Grafenwoehr's da Lino Italian restaurant. Upcoming trips:

- Jan. 15-19 -- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Ski Trip to Kitzbühel, Austria
- Feb. 12-16 -- President's Holiday Ski Trip to Brixen, Italy
- April 8-11 -- Spring Break Ski Trip to Ischgl, Austria

Ski Club trip buses make stops in Hohenfels for all trips.

For more info, contact Tony Neaverth at 475-7065 or Peter Bruennig at 475-6570.

Clinic holiday schedule

The Graf clinic Acute Care Area will be closed during the holiday period, Dec. 19 through Jan. 4. All emergencies after normal duty hours (weekdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.) should report directly to a local German hospital for emergency care.

The Graf Health Clinic will con-

tinue operations during this period, seeing active duty sick call weekdays 6:30-7:30 a.m., and all other beneficiaries throughout the day. The clinic will be closed on holidays and training holidays. Strip maps to local hospitals in Weiden, Amberg and Eschenbach are available at the clinic and will be posted at the normal entrance to the Acute Care Area. For more info, call the 475-8307 or civ. 09641-83-8307.

Vilseck Health Clinic hours

Appointment hours

- Mon/Tue/Fri: 7 a.m.-4 p.m.
 - Wed: 7 a.m.-6:15 p.m.
 - Thu: 1-3 p.m.
- Military sick call
- Mon/Wed/Fri: 7-7:30 a.m.
 - Thu: 12:45-1:30 p.m.

Call at least 24 hours in advance if you must cancel an appointment.

Women's morning out

The Protestant Women of the Chapel, Vilseck, holds morning meetings, the third Wednesday of each month, in the Vilseck Chapel Fellowship Hall. Meetings feature cooking lessons, crafts instruction and more. Free childcare is available.

Bank notes

Community Bank closings, changes and info:

- All locations, will be open Dec. 24 and 31, 9 a.m. to noon
- All locations will be closed Dec. 25 and 26 and Jan. 1 and 6

Credit Union notes

All Service Credit Union branch offices will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

Adopt a German sailor

Invite a Bundesmarine guard to a home-cooked meal during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Share your culture, friendship and fun. To register, call Hohenfels ACS at 466-4860 or civ. 09472-83-4860. ACS will put you in contact with a soldier; you work out the when, where and what.

Gift wrapping

The American Red Cross of Hohenfels, Vilseck and Grafenwoehr is once again the umbrella organization for coordinating the Annual Christmas Gift Wrap Fundraisers for the area. Schedules are tentative, contact the Red Cross representative for more info.

- Hohenfels -- Winter Bazaar, at the Community Activities Center, times mat vary.
- Vilseck -- Daily at the PX, through Dec. 24

For more info, contact Deanna M. Young, American Red Cross 466-1760 or civ. 09472-831760; or Jana Zehner at 476-1760, civ. 09662-831760.

Holiday season

U.S. Army, Europe, will observe the Christmas-New Year holiday period Dec. 19-Jan. 1. During this period, each place of duty will be fully manned in the morning. In the afternoon at least one knowledgeable person who can contact off duty personnel and leadership, if required, will be present. Variations to this schedule may be made by subordinate commanders so long as it meets the intent of ensuring a knowledgeable person in the office during normal duty hours and halving total duty time during the holiday period.

Local VFW posts

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has three posts serving the 100th ASG community, all three have regularly scheduled meetings:

- Graf -- Post 10692, second Tuesday each month, 6 p.m., Scala complex on Alte Amberger Strasse, just outside Gate 1. For more info, contact Kurt Spohr at 0175-1914833.
- Vilseck -- Post 9334, third Monday each month, 7 p.m., Bldg. 133, the VFW-American Legion Hall. For more info, contact Robert Crawford at 09662 38 130.
- Hohenfels -- Post 10557, first Wednesday each month, 6 p.m., Hormansdorf Gasthaus in Hammer. For more info, contact Daniel Haynes at 09474-8434.

Teen center notes

- *Teen's Night Out* -- The Vilseck MS/Teen Center will host Teen's Night Out at Yesterday's in Vilseck the second Saturday of the month. Entry is free, and includes free food, music and fun. The social party will be from 8-11 p.m. A dress code will be enforced.
- *Youth of the Year* -- If you're a good citizen, involved in your community, a good student and good help at home, you could win from \$5,000 to \$10,000 dollars. Deadline for packet submission is Jan. 5. For more info, call 476-3144 or 475-7441.

- *Ski Trip* -- The Vilseck MS/Teen Center is hosting a one-day ski trip to Ochsenkopf Dec. 23. The cost is 40 Euro and includes trip, equipment and an all-day lift pass. Youth may bring lunches or bring additional Euro for buying meals onsite. This is for beginners as well as professionals! The bus leaves the Vilseck MS/Teen Center at 8 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m. Parents are always welcome to join. Attendees must be registered with Youth Services. Deadline for permission slips is Dec. 18. For more info, call 476-3144.

Discover deployment resources at the Expo

BY MARIA YOST
ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICES

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team will host a Family and Soldier Readiness Expo Dec. 10-12 and 15-19 in the Hilltop Gym on Rose Barracks, Vilseck.

The Expo showcases initiatives within the 409th BSB Military Community that are designed to assist family members of soldiers who will deploy with the 3rd Brigade next spring.

This is a chance for soldiers and families to get answers to questions about the upcoming deployment.

More than 40 agencies will be on hand to answer questions, provide information and present special programs for family members of deployed soldiers.

For example, Child and Youth Services offers free registration for first-time registrants.

The goal is to encourage all families to register their children with CYS, even if they are not planning on using the facilities on a regular basis.

"We have had several situations

with the current deployment where an emergency situation arose and we could not provide care for the children because they are not registered with CYS," said Glenda Sloan, CYS Special Programs and Services Director.

To register children with CYS at the Expo, bring the sponsor's end of month leave and earnings statement, children's shot records and contact info for two emergency release designees.

In addition to being prepared for emergencies, CYS registration is required to register children for youth activities, or to use the Child Development Center, School Age Services, or Federal Child Care providers, and to participate in CYS special openings.

CYS will also provide free onsite childcare for individuals attending the expo.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation has prepared a schedule of special and ongoing events to help family members keep busy during the deployment. Many MWR facilities are also offering free coupons and other items to

spouses at the Expo.

NAF employment representatives will list current job openings and take applications.

Finance, Legal, Housing, Optometry and many other agencies will be present to answer any questions families may have.

Another aspect of the Expo will be the Speaker's Corner. Every hour, speakers will present various deployment-related topics, such as Money Management, Stress Management, Meeting the Media, Time Management and Impact of the Mission on Family Life.

Spouses are encouraged to attend the Expo with their soldier on the date specified for their unit. Unit dates are listed below.

- Dec. 10-11: 2-63 Armor
- Dec. 12: 2-2 IN
- Dec. 15-16: 2-2 IN, B/1-63 AR
- Dec. 17-19: 201st FSB, 38th PSB, 38th Postal and 106th Finance

Spouses attending the Expo will be eligible for prizes including Enjoy Tours express and overnight tours, an ITR Day Trip, a Pentax digital camera and much more.

DFAS offers electronic W-2s via myPay website

DFAS CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Current myPay military users and Defense Finance and Accounting Service civilian employees who request or have a myPay Personal Identification Number will receive an electronic W-2.

The electronic method is the primary means of delivery for Soldiers and DFAS civilians. Users may elect to receive a printed W-2 by mail by choosing the hard copy option before Dec. 1.

"This is an opportunity for our customers to better manage their pay information," said Dennis Eicher, DFAS Military and Civilian Pay Services. "We are providing myPay customers access to their tax and pay preferences online. We also know some individuals would rather have a hard copy statement, so we are giving them that choice."

The online version, with printing instructions, is 100 percent compatible for all tax purposes and allows users to print as many copies as they need. A 'save' button allow them to save W-2s to disk.

To ensure affected customers receive either an electronic or

hard copy W-2, there will be a "no change" period Dec. 1-Jan. 31.

During this period, users will not be allowed to change their W-2 print election on myPay, but may request a paper W-2 by contacting their local financial services activity.

To select the hard copy W-2, go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. Under 'Taxes,' select 'Turn on/off Hardcopy of W-2.' Once this option is selected, carefully read the various questions posed.

If you are a Soldier, you may opt out of this election electronically through myPay or submit a written request to your local servicing finance activity.

Retired military and annuitants, as well as civilians outside of DFAS, will receive W-2s or 1099 statements by mail.

The electronic W-2 will discontinue after a DFAS civilian employee separates from employment or after a military member separates without retirement. Civilian retirees' taxable retired pay will be reported on a Form 1099 by the Office of Personnel Management. Military retirees may opt to receive an electronic 1099R through myPay.

Family & Soldier Readiness Expo: Dec. 10-12 and 15-19, Rose Barracks Fitness Center

Graf community flag footballers earn runner-up honors

BY PAUL DRIESSEN
409TH BSB SPORTS & FITNESS

The Grafenwoehr community flag football team competed at the Army Europe Community-Level Flag Football Championships at Leighton Barracks in Wuerzburg.

In order, Kitzingen, Bamberg, Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels qualified as the top four finishers from the southern division season.

Hanau, Heidelberg, Kaiserslautern and Darmstadt qualified for the northern division as well, rounding out the eight positions.

Hohenfels slides in

As the winner of the #4 seed from the south, Hohenfels was supposed to challenge Vicenza, the top seed from Italy, in a best of three series with the loser going home. Great plan, but when Vicenza failed to show up, Hohenfels slid into the championships.

This is the inaugural season for community-level flag football and the format for the championship

has changed from the other championships. Normally, the four teams from each division play a round robin tournament among themselves to determine who will be the top seeded teams. This time, however, the teams from the southern division played each of the teams from the northern division and then the results were combined with the final standings from the regional play.

Jaws of defeat?

Grafenwoehr opened the tournament in inauspicious form in a loss to Hanau, the north's #1 seed getting dusted 48-7. The Graf squad threw an interception on the first play from scrimmage that was run back for a touchdown and the route was on.

The team knew that they let one get through their hands, but used this game like a practice and worked on some other things that were still going well for them.

Player/Coach James Blake helped set the mindset of the team for the rest of the tournament.



photos by Larry Reilly

Player-coach James Blake almost snatches victory in the end zone, but the ball was tipped at the last second leaving Graf a runner-up in the championships.

"We had to forget about what happened in the first game because that wasn't us," said Blake.

No consolation, please

They were not looking to get to the consolation game — they had a lot of hurdles to get over just to make it to the championships, and they knew they were better than that score. They also had nothing to prove except pride since the rest of the teams wrote off Graf as a contender after that loss.

They took care of business defeating Heidelberg 25-12 where the receivers started catching everything in sight.

They got by Darmstadt 20-14 when Russell Patton intercepted a ball late in the game preventing the go-ahead score for Darmstadt; and closed out the round robin tournament with their best defensive effort netting three interceptions in a shutout over K-town, winning 32-0.

In the final game of the round robin play, the defense really came together as a unit and took control of the offensive line. The dominant play of Joe Gibson and Zennie Peterson (AKA the "Pit Bulls") wreaked havoc on offenses all day forcing the QB to be much more mobile than they would have liked as well as getting the defense off the field after third and fourth down attempts.

Saturday morning's action started in the single elimination championship bracket, with Grafenwoehr holding down the #4 seed overall.

Before the games got underway, Heidelberg expressed their disappointment about their fifth seed placing since after their certain victory over Grafenwoehr, they didn't want to play the tournament favorite: Hanau.

Well, the Graf team made the point moot when they defeated Heidelberg for the second time in

the tournament by a convincing score of 27-13 giving berth to a grudge match against Hanau.

The Graf/Hanau #2 game was a classic seesaw battle of wills. The Grafenwoehr Grizzlies had one weapon up their sleeve in James Wofford who broke away from work to play on the weekend. Wofford's speed and ability to work the route-runners that Hanau had was instrumental in keeping their offense in check.

The other major change that Graf made was to keep the talented defensive line in check by throwing passes to their offensive linemen, which is legal in flag football.

The secondary of Hanau was suspect and they were exploited for five touchdowns.

Last chance catch

Leading 30-28 in the waning seconds of the game, Hanau had one last chance with six seconds remaining, but Blake intercepted the ball in the end zone to complete their march to destiny. The good guys pulled off the upset of the tournament.

The team that everyone had written off in the tournament after that first loss to Hanau was now in the championship finals as favorites to win it all where they would face their arch nemesis of the southern division in Bamberg.

Bamberg earned their trip to the finals by defeating K-town 24-12, and then shutting out Kitzingen 19-0 booking their appearance in the finals.

Kitzingen took care of Hohenfels 26-7 to get to their semi-finals match.

Whenever Grafenwoehr was able to work with a lead, their players really rallied and seemed to put forth a greater collective effort.

They got out of the blocks very fast in the championship game on

a broken play. A simple pass play turned into a pass that was in the air over 50 yards from quarterback Allen Baker to Blake who waltzed in for the score.

"Our offensive line gave me lots of extra time so that I could check down to my second or third read before having to get rid of the ball," said Baker.

James Martin, Calvin Coates, Charles Davis and Andre Williams lead the attack on the offensive line.

Grafenwoehr was riding high leading 6-0 but was trailing 7-6 at halftime.

They were the first ones again to score in the second half going up 12-7 but went down 14-12 with enough time for one last try.

With six seconds left in the ballgame, Baker found Blake open in the end zone. Blake got his hands on the ball, but the play was perfectly defended when the Bamberg player simultaneously knocked the ball out of Blake's hands.

No conversions

The offense crossed the goal line seven times in their last two games, but failed to convert any point after touchdown (PAT) attempts.

They were running a successful play all season called "get open" where just about everyone went out into the formation, but defenses got the better edge on them this tournament.

Hanau played the consolation game for 3rd and 4th place against Kitzingen and rolled 28-0 in a shutout.

The tournament MVP trophy goes to the best player on the winning team, but among his teammates, James Blake was chosen as the team's MVP for the tournament averaging at least two touchdowns a game and playing defensive cornerback.



Graf QB Allen Baker does his best 'Hail Mary' impression in the final moments of the championship game.

New SMA on deck: Army taps tanker to take top enlisted troop slot

By SGT. 1ST CLASS KEN HUDSON
319TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
DETACHMENT

V Corps' command sergeant major has been selected for the highest position an enlisted person can achieve in the U.S. Army — to be the next Sergeant Major of the Army.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston will leave Baghdad and his position as the V Corps and Combined Joint Task Force-7 command sergeant major at the end of December, and is scheduled to assume duties as the Army's 13th Sergeant Major of the Army in mid-January.

Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter J. Schoomaker called Preston Nov. 18 to give him the news that he was his number-one choice to replace Sergeant Major of the Army Jack L. Tilley.

"It was a surprise," said Preston, who had gone through an interview process along with several other sergeants major. Going into the interview, Preston said, he assessed himself and felt he was, "a little better than some, and not as good as some of the others."

Preston, a native of Mount Savage, Md., joined the Army as an armor crewmember in 1975. His 28 years of Army service took him through every leadership position in his field, to service as V Corps command sergeant major, and even to the British Royal Armoured Corps Gunnery School, where he served as an instructor.

Like many young men who join the service, Preston says he originally thought he'd leave the Army after his first enlistment to go to college. Now, when he speaks

to noncommissioned officers and junior Soldiers on the subject of retention, he tells them of the positive experiences he had coming up through the ranks.

"The noncommissioned officers and the leaders that I worked for made a very big impression on me," said Preston. "I enjoyed the quality of life that I was able to give to my family, and my family was enjoying the military life."

As he came up through the Army ranks, Preston said, becoming a command sergeant major was not necessarily one of his career goals.

"I wanted to be a tank platoon sergeant," he said.

He achieved that goal, serving as platoon sergeant for the crews of four main battle tanks. He says the times he spent in a company or battery with Soldiers were the most special and rewarding of his career.

Preston deployed to Kuwait and later Iraq with V Corps a year ago. He gives credit for coalition successes there to the "Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines from across the coalition. They've all done a magnificent job," he said.

As Sergeant Major of the Army, Preston will serve as personal advisor to the Army Chief of Staff on all matters affecting enlisted Soldiers, such as training, NCO development and Soldier and family well-



"One of the most important things we can do to preserve our force for the future is to talk with Soldiers,"

— Cmd Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston

being. He will observe Army training and operations worldwide to listen to Soldier and family member concerns and make recommendations for improvements to Army, Department of Defense and Congressional leadership.

"The most important thing that the Sergeant Major of the Army does is, he spends time out with Soldiers [and] understands Soldiers' cares and concerns; understands the hurdles that leaders face in training an army and preparing it for combat," said Preston.

"One of the most important things we can do to preserve our force for the future is to

talk with Soldiers," he said. "[Keeping] Soldiers in the Army is all about leadership that cares. The Soldiers [and their families are] not going to want to stay in the Army unless they have caring leadership."

Operation Iraqi Freedom has been a learning experience for everyone involved in it, Preston says, and his tour here gives him fresh viewpoints on Soldier concerns to take along to Washington.

"Our doctrine is very sound, and [so is] what we've done to prepare for this operation. But at the same time, we're always assessing where we are, and where we need to go, and ... where we wish we had the additional time to make the Soldiers even better than what they were," he said.

Although Preston has reached the pinnacle of an enlisted Soldier's career, he says that when it's time for him to retire, he wants only to be remembered as a Soldier who really cared for Soldiers, who represented Soldiers, and who always put Soldiers' welfare first.

"If I have one regret in leaving here to be the Sergeant Major of the Army, it's that all the Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of all the coalition forces ... that I couldn't take them with me. And my heart and prayers stay here with all those that remain behind."

'Christmas Tree' effect no holiday for troops on battlefield

By DONNA MILES
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

They call it the "Christmas tree" effect. Defense engineers come up with gadgets and gizmos to help troops on the battlefield, and — like ornaments added to a holiday tree — they hang them on the warfighter.

As a result, troops may carry combat loads of 75 to 150 pounds.

"What warfighters are carrying today is just ridiculous," said Robert Kinney, Individual Protection Directorate, U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center at Natick, Mass. "Our challenge is to provide greater protections and capabilities, but with less weight and bulk."

An army of engineers and researchers is committed to reducing the load — while making troops safer and more formidable.

Their goal is to incorporate new, lighter-weight materials to reduce loads by almost half. Engineers are exploring advanced technologies that offer capabilities once thought restricted to the science fiction or comic book characters.

Tomorrow's warfighters, Kinney said, will wear uniforms with built-in chemical and biological protec-

tion, embedded with electric wires and fiber optics that give sophisticated battlefield capabilities.

Uniforms will be waterproof and flame-resistant, with built-in insect repellent, antibacterial agents that help stop open injuries from getting infected, and even antimicrobial agents that keep odor in check.

New synthetic materials could make uniforms warm in cold environments, cool in hot ones, and lighter in weight and bulk.

Uniforms of the future will allow troops to adapt quickly to changing conditions. They'll change color, chameleon-style, to reflect the surrounding environment.

Boots will come with snap-on soles for different terrains and removable liners. Headgear will take on a whole new dimension, protecting against ballistic and fragmentation while serving as the wearer's personal "control center."

Tomorrow's helmets will integrate thermal sensors, video cameras, and chemical and biological sensors.

They'll include a visor that can act as a "heads-up display monitor" equivalent to two 17-inch computer monitors in front of the wearer's eyes.

Powering all the warfighter's gear will be a single battery, capable of running 24 hours or longer before being recharged.

As futuristic as these technologies may sound, many are being incorporated into the Army's Objective Force Warrior — which LeeAnn Barkhouse, business liaison for the program, describes as a "system of systems" being developing for warfighters in 2010 and beyond.

The program is expected to become a prototype for all the military services, she said.

Barkhouse said Objective Force Warrior introduces a far-ranging array of new capabilities, many of them embedded directly into the warfighter's uniform to reduce the heavy, cumbersome add-ons that have evolved over time.

And unlike the current combat load, which imposes immense weights on the warfighter's back and shoulders, Barkhouse said the new system will center its lighter load at the body's strongest point: the waist and hips.

Gone will be the "Christmas tree effect." In its place, she said, will be a system that works with, rather than against, the warfighter's body

— and offers almost unimaginable new capabilities.

"It represents a tremendous advance," Barkhouse said.



Fighting Temptations

Cuba Gooding Jr., Beyoncé Knowles

A smooth New York ad executive loses his job and has nowhere to turn. Then he discovers he's going to receive an inheritance from a wealthy aunt who recently died. When he returns to his hometown to collect, he uncovers a catch: First he must organize a successful gospel choir. Easier said than sung, until he meets sultry jazz singer Beyoncé.

Rated PG-13

Looney Tunes: Back In Action

Brendan Fraser, Jenna Elfman

Bobby teams with Bugs Bunny, Daffy, Tweety, and Taz as they leave the Warner Bros. back lot in Hollywood for exotic locales such as Africa and Las Vegas, where they search for Bobby's father and the mythical Blue Diamond.

Rated PG

Cold Creek manor

Dennis Quaid, Sharon Stone

The Tilsons and their kids move to a house in the country, but their idyllic family life is threatened when Dale reveals that there's more to the house than meets the eye it seems that the original owners were brutally murdered.

Rated R

The Cat in the Hat

Mike Myers, Kelly Preston

Adaptation of the Dr. Seuss classic. Sally and Conrad are left home on a rainy day and are rowdily entertained by a mysterious man-size cat.

Rated PG



The Order

Heath Ledger, Shannyn Sossamon

A conflicted, rebellious priest travels to Rome to investigate the death of his mentor. The young priest, a troubled artist with whom he shares a turbulent past, and his closest friend and colleague discover, the mysterious death may be the work of the Sin Eater, an ancient figure who plays God on Earth by absolving the unforgivable of their sins outside the Church, allowing great evil to go unpunished.

Rated R

Once Upon a Time in Mexico

Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek

El Mariachi is forced out of hiding by Sands, a corrupt CIA agent. Sands recruits the reclusive hero to sabotage a plot by Barillo, who is plans to assassinate the president of Mexico.

Rated R

The Medallion

Jackie Chan, Claire Forlani

A Hong Kong cop suffers a near-fatal accident while investigating a case involving a mysterious medallion. He soon discovers that the medallion, gives him incredible speed, strength and skills. He is determined to learn the secret of the medallion and face down the evil Snakehead.

Rated PG-13

My Boss's Daughter

Ashton Kutcher, Tara Reid

When Tom's boss asks him to housesit, he tries to use it as an opportunity to win the heart of his boss's daughter Lisa. What he doesn't plan on is the other houseguests.

Rated PG-13

now playing

Movies start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise specified. Movies are subject to change by local theaters. Dates not listed, theaters are closed.

Vilseck, Mike Jurkewicz

(09662-83-1790)

Dec. 11	Matchstick Men	(PG-13)
Dec. 12	Haunted Mansion	(PG)
Dec. 13	Elf	(PG)
Dec. 14	Matrix Revolutions	(R)
Dec. 15	Secondhand Lions	(PG)
Dec. 16	The Order	(R)
Dec. 17	Sinbad	(PG)
Dec. 18	Fighting Temptations	(PG-13)
Dec. 19	The Last Samurai	(R)
Dec. 20	Once Upon a Time in Mexico	(R)
Dec. 21	Looney Tunes Back In Action	(PG)

Hohenfels, General Patton

(09472-83-1790)

Dec. 11	Medallion	(PG-13)
Dec. 12	Looney Tunes: Back in Action	(G)
Dec. 13	My Boss's Daughter	(PG-13)
Dec. 14	Looney Tunes: Back in Action	(G)
Dec. 17	Pokemon Heroes	(G)
Dec. 18	Cold Creek Manor	(R)
Dec. 19	Cat in the Hat	(PG)
Dec. 20	Fighting Temptations	(PG-13)
Dec. 21	Cat In The Hat	(PG)

Grafenwoehr, Camp Aachen

(09641-83-6115)

Call for details

Grafenwoehr, Tower

(09641-83-1790)

Dec. 11	Matrix Revolutions	(R)
Dec. 12	Cat in the Hat	(PG)
Dec. 13	Medallion	(PG-13)
Dec. 14	D. Roberts: Former Child Star	(PG)
Dec. 17	Spy Kids 3D	(PG)
Dec. 18	Looney Tunes: Back in Action	(G)
Dec. 19	Haunted Mansion	(PG)
Dec. 20	My Boss's Daughter	(PG-13)
Dec. 21	Once Upon a Time in Mexico	(R)

3rd BCT

Family and Soldier Readiness Expo

Discover how to make the deployment go a little smoother

December 8-12 & 15-19
Hilltop Gym, Vilseck
1100 - 1800 hrs

Prize drawings exclusively for spouses

Free on-site childcare provided by CYS

Stuttgart

Boxing

Invitational

Stuttgart Boxing Invitational
 Jan. 10, Patch Fitness Center
 General Admission \$3
 Ringside seating \$5
 To register or participate
 or for tickets call 0711-680-5386.

The Bavarian Arts Guild
 Vilseck Drama Club Presents

The Best

Christmas Pageant Ever

by Barbara Robinson

Performances:
 December 12th at 7:00 p.m. December 15th at 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. December 18th at 2:00 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$5.00, Children \$3.00, Family Ticket \$15.00
 No Children under 5 years old during evening performance, please
 Vilseck High School Multi Purpose Room